

**Clarkebridge & 1st Newtownhamilton Presbyterian Church
a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC104941

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Clarksbridge & 1st Newtownhamilton congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Cortamlet Road,
Newtownhamilton,
BT35 0EE

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104941)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were

Rev. Richard Ker Graham

Mr. Alan Smyth

Mr. David Smyth

Mr. Mervyn McBride

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister

Rev. Richard Ker Graham

Clerk of Session

Mr. Alan Smyth

Church Secretary

Mr. William Hughes

Treasurer

Mrs. Fiona Smyth

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its Kirk Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code, the book of the constitution and government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Kirk Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community. The Kirk Sessions has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least twice in each year or as appropriate.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant of its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office, can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of those who vote.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Clarksbridge & 1st Newtownhamilton Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Newry Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Clarksbridge & 1st Newtownhamilton Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures and exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregations' mission purpose is by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place.

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.
- As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed on several occasions during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular Bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School
- Presbyterian Women
- Good News Club
- Holiday Bible Club
- Teen & Twenties Bible Study Class

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am and 8.00pm on the fourth Sunday of each month. During the week the Bible Study/Prayer meeting provides an opportunity for members to meet for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

On 31 December 2023 there were 44 communicant members and 47 families connected with the congregations.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister and elders.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation held several special midweek meetings during the year where missionary speakers were invited to come and speak to those present concerning their work. These meetings were supported by other local fellowships from the district outside of our denomination.

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on denominational basis beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The United Appeal Fund provides financial support for mission personnel at home and overseas, assists congregations with the deployment of locally based staff, enables church planting, provides grant support for the upkeep of church premises, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

During 2023 the congregation also contributed to the work of:

Tear Fund, Belfast City Mission, Earl Haig Fund, Mercy Ships, Middle Eastern Reformed Fellowship and Presbyterian Children's Society.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in the month of June 2023.

Property

2023 saw our general project of maintenance and repair on the Meeting House, Manse and surrounding grounds continued. Substantial repairs were completed on the Meeting House roof and a program of painting and decorating at the Manse was also completed.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Organisations

Sunday School met each Sunday morning during the months of February to June (10:00am until 11:00am) and September to December (10:00am until 11:00am) during 2023. It was normally attended by 9 children from the age of 4 to 12 years and taught by 2 Sunday School teachers. The children would sing as well as learn catechism and were taught Bible lessons by their teachers. All teachers had the appropriate child protection training.

Teen's & Twenties Bible Study class for teenagers met on two Sunday evenings during the months of February to May (8:30pm until 9:30pm) and September to December (8:30pm until 9:30pm) during 2023. It was normally attended by 9 - 12 young people from the age of 14 to 19 years and taught by 2 – 4 teachers. The lessons consisted of Bible reading and discussion to enable the young people to meet the challenges of the world before them. All teachers had the appropriate child protection training.

Good News Club met fortnightly for 6 sessions from September to December 2023 in Clarksbridge Church Hall. During each session up to 23 children, aged 4 to 11 years old, met to pray, sing, memorise Bible verses, learn about missionaries, hear Bible stories and to play games or do crafts. Throughout the sessions the children received consistent Bible teaching. 4 leaders led the club each time they met and all had the appropriate child protection training.

The Presbyterian Women meetings were held two nights each month for fellowship, from January to April & September until December. Various topics were discussed and prayerful support of various for missionary organisations offered up. During the month of December, the Presbyterian Woman organised a Congregational dinner, with the combined support of our sister congregations in County Monaghan. It was attended by 60 individuals of all ages.

Holiday Bible Club for boys and girls of primary school age was held during the last week of June 2023. It was attended by 45 children from age 4 to 11. During each evening there were singing, quizzes, memory verses and bible lessons followed by games outside, weather permitting. Many of our teenage young people and young adults lead these activities, supported by more senior members of our congregation and all activities were completed under our child protection guidelines.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need (including the sick, disabled and bereaved).

Generally, the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members, or are facilitated through presbyteries or are organised and delivered centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by central resources in almost all cases. Public access is made known through the use of notice boards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

The benefits are demonstrated through regular evaluation of the services and informal and ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with, the community in which pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 60 regular contributors during the year 2023. The Congregations total income for the year 2023 was £53,742 and the total expenditure was £80,934

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregation. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 to prepare a receipts and payments account. This Financial Account, for the year 2023, has been adopted by the congregation, approved by the Church Committee and audited by Mr. Colin Whiteside, Newry. A copy of this Financial Account will be submitted to the Charity Commission (Northern Ireland) with the Trustees Report

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 17th October 2023 and signed on its behalf by

Rev. Richard Ker Graham

Minister



Mr. Alan Smyth

Clerk of Session

